



# Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

[www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com](http://www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com)

August 7 - 8, 2020

## What's In The Box?

**SIERRA BLANCA OR ZOEY ONIONS:** These varieties have a very thin skin and they are in their awkward stage where they are too dry to wash but not yet cured enough to dry clean. As such, they may look a little rough from the outside, but please don't judge an onion by its skin. Peel it away and enjoy the mild, sweet flavor inside!

**ITALIAN GARLIC:** Use this juicy garlic in this week's featured recipe for **Salerno-Style Grilled Eggplant** and see how the flavor comes alive!

**GREEN AND/OR ITALIAN ZUCCHINI:** Check out [LoveandLemons.com](http://LoveandLemons.com) to learn different tools you can use to make your own Zoodles (zucchini noodles). While a spiralizer is a fun tool to have, you can also make zoodles with a simple chef's knife!

**GREEN AND SILVER SLICER CUCUMBERS:** Head over to our blog and take a look at this week's **Cooking With the Box** Article which includes links to four delicious recipes using cucumbers in pizza, burgers, beverages and a grain bowl!

**EGYPTIAN SPINACH:** This is a unique summer green also known as Molokhia which means "vegetable for a king." It has exceptionally high levels of nutrients that help to boost immunity and it's delicious! You can read all about this green in our **August 2-3, 2013 newsletter article** found on our website in the archives, or go to this week's **Cooking With the Box** article on our blog for more information. This green is typically eaten cooked and it contains a soluble fiber that gives it a viscous texture when cooked making it great for thickening soups and sauces. Chef Andrea's favorite way to use this green is in a traditional Egyptian Spinach soup, also featured in our August 2-3, 2013 newsletter. The Japanese beetles seemed to like this green too, which accounts for the holes in some leaves. Just remove these leaves and enjoy the remainder.

**GOLD POTATOES:** This week's potato selection features gold skinned-gold flesh varieties named "Molli" and "Carola." Both are waxy potatoes that are excellent choices for roasting, potato salad, soups, or pan-frying.

**SWEET CORN:** We think you'll find this week's sweet corn will live up to its name which is "Awesome!" Don't forget....KEEP IT COLD! This is the key to the best tasting sweet corn!

**"VALENTINE" RED GRAPE OR CHOCOLATE SPRINKLES TOMATOES:** Eat them raw or cut them in half and roast them in the oven drizzled with olive oil and tossed with fresh herbs and minced garlic. When they are soft and some of the juice has evaporated, remove from the oven and toss with pasta or spoon over grilled bread!

**SUN JEWEL MELON OR FRENCH ORANGE OR SWEET SARAH MELON:** Sun jewel melons are an oval shaped Korean melon with a bright yellow rind and white stripes. The flesh is crispy, white and sweet. Some of our other melon varieties are just starting to ripen. More to come next week!

**GREEN BELL PEPPER:** What do you do with one or two green bell peppers? Chop it up along with some onion and garlic and use it to make scrambled eggs or an omelet!

**JALAPEÑO PEPPER:** Don't overlook this one, hot pepper in this week's box! If you don't have a need for it this week, put it in the freezer. You just might need it later or sometime this winter!

**BROCCOLI:** You can't go wrong with Broccoli Casserole for dinner! Check out this week's **Cooking With the Box** article for links to several different versions! PS: Don't forget to use the stems!

**EGGPLANT:** Read more about this week's **vegetable feature** in our newsletter or on our blog. It is best to store eggplant at room temperature and use it within a few days. Please note, for best results, please cook eggplant.

## Vegetable Feature: Flashy, Silky, Classy—That's Eggplant By Chef Andrea

We didn't eat a lot of eggplant where I grew up in central Indiana. In fact, the first time I ate eggplant might have been when I was in culinary school. As beautiful and eye-catching as it was, I have to admit I was a bit intimidated by it because it was unlike any other vegetable I had ever seen. Eggplant is a unique crop in a class all its own, but I also think it may be one of the most beautiful crops we grow! Over the years I've learned to appreciate eggplant, its characteristics and the traditional ways eggplant shows up in cuisines all around the world.

Eggplant grows on plants that are several feet tall. There are many varieties of eggplant ranging in size from small round ones the size of a golf ball to large globe eggplant weighing over a pound. They come in a variety of colors ranging from various shades of purple to black, green, white and orange. We have narrowed our line-up of eggplant to four including Lilac Bride, Purple Dancer, Listada and the traditional Black eggplant. Please refer to our **previous blog post** which includes pictures and profiles of each eggplant and highlights the characteristics of each in further detail. Each variety is best for different uses, so it's helpful to visualize which variety you have before you decide how you want to use it.

Eggplant is a member of the nightshade family and must be cooked. Many resources will tell you to salt eggplant before cooking it to remove bitterness. While some older varieties were bitter, the new varieties we grow have been selected because they are not bitter, thus you can skip the salting step for that reason. You may still choose to salt eggplant to soften the flesh so it doesn't absorb too much oil. Most of our varieties of eggplant have skin that is tender enough to eat, thus depending upon how you are using it, you do not always need to peel them either.

Eggplant has a soft, silky texture when cooked, which is one of its most unique attributes. While its flavor is very mild, the texture is what allows it to absorb other flavors. When you cut into eggplant, you might even describe its raw texture as being kind of "spongy," and in many ways it is kind of like a flavor sponge! When pairing eggplant with other ingredients in dishes, make sure you're using good quality ingredients. For example if a recipe calls for olive oil, make sure you use a good olive oil as the eggplant will absorb that flavor. Eggplant is often paired with other summer vegetables including tomatoes, onions, garlic and peppers. It also goes well with flavorful olive oil, tahini, herbs such as basil and parsley and spices including cumin, coriander, sumac, and cinnamon. Depending on the part of the world a recipe is coming from, you'll also find eggplant served with dairy products including yogurt, cheese (feta, Parmesan and mozzarella), and cream and fruits including lemons and pomegranate.

When cooking eggplant, you definitely want to cook it to the soft and tender point. This is not a vegetable that you want to be "al dente" or to have any "crunch" left in it. Soft and smoochy is good, but you can have soft, tender eggplant that also holds its shape. Some varieties will do this better than others. Eggplant may be grilled, fried, sautéed, baked, steamed, stewed and roasted. In addition to the classic dishes mentioned above, I was surprised to learn that eggplant can also be used in baking! I was so intrigued I had to give it a try, but it also makes sense so why not?! Eggplant functions in ways similar to applesauce or bananas in baked goods by adding moisture and a silky, smooth texture.

Eggplant does not store terribly well, so it is best to use it soon after getting it. It is best stored at a temperature of about 45-50°F, but your home refrigerator should be colder than this which can cause chill injury. Thus, we recommend storing your eggplant on the kitchen counter and use it within 2-4 days. If it does start to get a little soft, don't worry, just cook it. It will get soft with cooking anyway!

### Chocolate Eggplant Torte

Yield: 6 servings or 12 cupcakes

1 eggplant, approximately 1 pound	1/3 cup maple syrup	1 1/2 tsp baking powder	<u>Optional Ingredients for Garnishing</u>
1 cup 70% dark chocolate chips	1 tsp vanilla	1 tsp baking soda	Dark chocolate
1 banana	1/4 cup good quality raw cacao powder	1/4 tsp salt	Sliced almonds
	1 tsp cinnamon	1/2 cup almond flour	Powdered Sugar
		Coconut oil, for greasing pan	

- Grease a loaf pan and line with a sheet of parchment paper or prepare a muffin tin with paper liners.
- Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease a cookie sheet, then slice the eggplant lengthwise. Place on the cookie sheet, cut side down. Bake for 20-30 minutes, or until the eggplant is cooked through and very soft. Remove the eggplant and cool enough to handle. Scrape the flesh away from the skin and puree it in a food processor or blender. You will need 1 cup of eggplant puree. If you have extra, reserve it for another use.
- Melt chocolate chips over boiling water in a double boiler.
- Once the chocolate is melted, add to a food processor or blender along with the eggplant puree, banana, maple syrup and vanilla. Puree until smooth. The mixture will look like a thick pudding at this point.
- In a large mixing bowl, sift the cacao powder, cinnamon, baking powder and baking soda. Add the almond flour and salt. Stir to combine the dry ingredients, then add the chocolate mixture and stir until just combined. The batter will be pretty thick at this point.
- Spread the batter into the greased loaf pan or portion the batter into muffin cups. Bake at 350°F for 40 minutes (if using a loaf pan), or 25 minutes if making cupcakes.
- Remove from the oven, let cool slightly in the pan, then grasp the parchment paper lining and use it to transfer the cake to a plate. If you are making cupcakes, carefully remove the cupcakes in their paper liners and allow to fully cool on a cooling rack.
- Once fully cooled, garnish to your liking. You may dust the cake/cupcakes with powdered sugar or you may choose to melt some additional chocolate to drizzle on top along with sliced almonds. Serve at room temperature and store any extras in the refrigerator.

This recipe was adapted from [FreshPlanetFlavor.com](http://FreshPlanetFlavor.com).

Visit our Blog (or page 3 of this newsletter) where you will find one more Eggplant recipe:

**Salerno-Style Marinated Grilled Eggplant**

### Salerno-Style Marinated Grilled Eggplant

Yield: 3-4 servings (as an appetizer or side dish)

3 Tbsp sunflower oil or other neutral oil	1 pound eggplant	1 Tbsp finely minced garlic	¼-½ tsp red pepper flakes
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste	¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil	1 Tbsp finely minced onion	Flaky salt (such as Maldon), for serving (optional)
	3 tsp red wine vinegar	2 Tbsp finely chopped fresh parsley	

1. Prepare the eggplant by slicing it in either direction (your choice), ¼ to ½ inch thick. Lay the slices out in a single layer on a cookie sheet. Using a pastry brush, brush sunflower oil on the eggplant. Season lightly with salt and pepper, then turn all the slices over. Repeat on the other side. Set aside for 10-15 minutes
2. Preheat a grill to medium heat. Alternatively, you may use a grill pan on the stovetop.
3. While you are preheating the grill, prepare the marinade. Select a serving plate or flat, shallow bowl that is 10-11 inches in diameter. Pour the extra-virgin olive oil on the plate, then add the red wine vinegar by drizzling it on top of the oil.
4. Next, sprinkle the minced garlic & onions, chopped parsley and red pepper flakes over the surface of the oil. Set aside in a location near where you will be cooking the eggplant.
5. When the grill is ready, add the slices of eggplant. Grill for several minutes on the first side, or until there are nice grill marks and the eggplant is starting to soften. Turn all the pieces over and repeat on the other side. Be careful to monitor the heat. You need it hot enough to get good grill marks, but you don't want the eggplant to cook too quickly. Once you have nice grill marks on both sides, test a piece to see if it's fully cooked (tender and soft). If it is not, move the slices of eggplant to a cooler part of the grill and continue to cook for a few more minutes or until it is tender. Alternatively, you can transfer the slices to a cookie sheet and bake them in a 350°F oven until they are tender (5-15 minutes depending on the degree of doneness and thickness of the slices).
6. When the eggplant is fully cooked, transfer the slices, while still hot, to the platter containing the oil mixture. Slide the pieces of eggplant into the seasoned oil so that the oil, garlic, etc is on the top and bottom of each piece. Allow the eggplant to cool in the oil to room temperature. If desired, or if it needs to be seasoned a little more to your liking, sprinkle with additional salt prior to serving.
7. Serve at room temperature along with crusty bread if you wish. After all, you need something to sop up the extra olive oil!

Recipe developed by Andrea Yoder.

Variation: This recipe is also applicable to zucchini. If you prefer, you could use a mix of zucchini and eggplant.